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LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

(Mr. SCALISE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks)

Mr. SCALISE. Madam Speaker, I rise for the purpose of inquiring of the majority leader the schedule for next week.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the majority leader of the House.

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman, the Republican whip from Louisiana, for yielding.

On Monday, the House will meet at 12 p.m., Madam Speaker, for morning-hour and 2 p.m. for legislative business, with votes postponed until 6:30 p.m.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, the House will meet at 10 a.m. for morning-hour and 12 p.m. for legislative business.

On Thursday, the House will meet at 9 a.m. for legislative business.

The House will consider several bills under suspension of the rules. The complete list of suspension bills will be announced by the close of business today.

The House will consider a resolution from the Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the U.S. Capitol recommending the House ask the Justice Department to charge Peter Navarro and Dan Scavino, Jr., with criminal contempt of Congress for refusing to testify about their actions and knowledge relating to the violent effort to prevent the certification of the 2020 election.

Additionally, Madam Speaker, the House may consider legislation related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional legislative items are possible.

Mr. SCALISE. Madam Speaker, as we look at the schedule for next week, obviously, there are a lot of concerns about the continuing rising price of gasoline that we have been seeing for the last year and a half. President Biden talked about some things that he will do.

In regard to some of the long-term fixes to lower gas prices that have been filed, I know I have mentioned them to the majority leader in the past. H.R. 6858 is one of the bills that would address some of the real impediments to getting more oil and gas production here in the United States. There are a number of other bills, including six dif-

ferent bills that were filed by the Natural Resources Committee recently, that would address some of the other specific challenges that are holding back the ability for America to produce more oil and gas.

I would ask the gentleman if we could get those bills on the calendar so that we can move to actually address the problems that are holding back American oil and gas production, thus leading to higher prices.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for that question, and I have been thinking about that because he asks that regularly.

I particularly have been thinking about that question in the context of the fact that we have so much available acreage on which to produce oil and gas currently permitted. When I say a number, we are talking about literally millions of acres.

Madam Speaker, there are 9,000 unused, approved permits right now. There are 26 million acres of public land available right now. There are 11 million acres of Federal waters available. That is 37 million acres in total.

In addition to that, 80 million acres in the Gulf were put up for auction last fall, 2021, under President Biden, which was the largest lease sale in U.S. history. Unfortunately, the private sector bought only 1.7 acres out of 80 million.

Frankly, it appears to be that no matter what we pass, no matter how many permits we make available, there is not an appetite in the private sector for producing more.

I say that in the context of the producers. To their credit, they are claiming victory. They are claiming victory at the extraordinary profits that they have gotten. They are buying back stocks. They are paying large dividends. But they are not producing more product.

Now, it may well be that they think the price is pretty high, and they are making a good profit and don't need to do anything more. But the gentleman's questions, Madam Speaker, continually imply that there is some impediment to producing more product.

Of course, the United States is the largest producer of oil and natural gas in the world, and we have increased very substantially over the past few years in production.

I say to the gentleman the committees are looking at the bills the gentleman refers to. But in terms of production, the United States is producing 18.61 billion barrels per day, which is 20 percent of the world's production.

The President announced, just the other day, the release of a million barrels per day from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. That is going to be 180 million barrels over the next 6 months.

In fact, when he did that, I don't know whether it had direct impact, but as the gentleman knows, the price on the global market has come down. I think it came down \$7 in the last month or \$7 in the last week.

The administration is clearly making some substantial policy changes, one of which is use it or lose it. I said there were 9,000 permitted, ready to go, ready to drill, right now, today.

The President has said, in his policies: We have given all these permits. If you are not going to use these permits, then you are either going to pay a fee or give them back, and we are going ask other people who want to produce more product.

You would think in the capitalist system which we have, which I strongly, strongly support, that given the price of oil being so high, people would look for more product, unless they want to limit the availability of product and, therefore, keep the price even higher.

I don't know which is the option there, but I will tell the gentleman that the President has activated the Defense Production Act, looking for critical materials, not just oil, but lithium, nickel, cobalt, graphite, manganese, for all sorts of things that we need. The President has taken very, very strong steps.

In addition to that, which is very important, Madam Speaker, what we have done is passed legislation which will, in the relatively near term—not tomorrow, not next week, not next monthmake us less and less reliant on overseas suppliers of energy that clearly have shown themselves to be not reliable and clearly have been seen to be people who want to create a monopoly. a cartel, so that they can keep prices unusually high and, of course, in the process continue to assault the environment and damage the climate of this global community, which will have an extraordinary cost.

In answer to the gentleman's question, the committees are looking at those bills that you mentioned. I will mention to them again looking at those bills.

Very frankly, any implication that we are not producing more product because there is some constraint by the Federal Government on production is simply not accurate, Madam Speaker. Again, 9,000 leases; 37 million acres available—26 million on public lands—permitted, ready to go, and they have not been drilled on.

The President is saying: If you don't drill, if you are not going to produce more product—we want more product. We need more product in the short term. If you don't want to produce it, then we are going to give those leases to somebody else.

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Mr. SCALISE. Madam Speaker, a number of problems with the way that the President's plan was described is that that is not what the President has done. The President has worked aggressively through many of his Federal agencies to, in fact, block the production of oil and gas.

And let me bring you back to candidate Barack Obama. There are a

number of specific examples I am going to give the gentleman because the gentleman gave a number of specific examples that just don't comply with the facts, starting with the 9,000 leases, the thousands of acres that I know the—

Mr. HOYER. Millions, millions.

Mr. SCALISE. President has talked about and others have talked about that, frankly, don't tell the picture of what the President is also doing to ensure that you cannot develop on those lands. You cannot develop with those 9.000 leases.

And I will go back to candidate Joe Biden. This is what Joe Biden said when he was a candidate for President. "No more drilling on Federal lands. No more drilling, including offshore. No ability for the oil industry to continue to drill, period. It ends."

That was Joe Biden as a candidate. The problem is he continued to take steps to carry through on that, starting with the 9,000 leases. If you have a lease to drill, it sounds really good until you realize that you still have to go through other steps to develop that. First of all, in some cases, you may actually go test wells, and you find out that they are not producing.

Thousands, by the way, of those in the 9,000 are not producing wells, meaning they are dry holes. There is no oil. Now, I don't know if you are going to fine a company because they are not drilling in an area where there is no oil, but maybe that is what the President is talking about, or maybe he doesn't understand the process of drilling for oil.

So then you go to some of the other areas, and I will give you section 1002 of ANWR, as an example. There needs to be seismic development where you go and test to see where the oil is.

We have a lot of advanced technology where, in the past, they might drill even more dry holes. Today, you can actually go and develop through seismic technology to know pretty well where the oil is, where the biggest reserves are, and then that is where you go and drill.

And so the Federal agencies are blocking the ability to do seismic activity, so you can't find out what is under the ground. So great. You have got a permit. You can't find out the seismic because the Biden administration is blocking it, so you can't make the multibillion-dollar investment because you don't know what is under the ground where.

In other countries, they allow that to happen. These companies are making investments, by the way. They are just not making the investment in America because they can't get cooperation from the regulating agencies because the regulating agencies don't want them to drill. Because, again, President Joe Biden as a candidate said, "There will be no more drilling... No ability for the oil industry to continue to drill, period. It ends." And then he directed his agencies to do it.

Another example that has been brought up just the other day, less

than a week ago. Again, we are talking about prices hovering in the \$100 range. Raiding, in the short term, the Strategic Petroleum Reserve actually makes our country less safe because the Strategic Petroleum Reserve is there to be a safety net. If there is a national crisis somewhere, you can rely on the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to get you through the next few weeks while you are working on a supply chain issue. That is not what is going on. The President is just raiding the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to try to cover up for his failed policy.

And so if you look at what he just did the other day, President Biden's Securities and Exchange Commission just put out a whole new set of rules and regulations to make it hard, not just for oil and gas companies, but any other company to use fossil fuels.

Again, he has talked about this publicly. He wants to move away from fossil fuels. The problem is, he is telling his regulatory agencies to go make it incredibly difficult and more expensive to use fossil fuels. In his budget just earlier this week, he proposed \$45 billion in new taxes on oil and gas in America.

Now, I know he has been, in the past, begging Putin to produce more. He is begging Venezuela, other dictators, Iran, to produce more oil. He is not proposing to raise their taxes. He is proposing to raise the tax on oil and gas produced in the American to the tune of \$45 billion in his budget he just released Monday.

That would mean higher gas prices. But what it also does is it tells the oil and gas companies, don't drill in America because that is what President Biden as candidate said, No more drilling, period. It ends.

Then the SEC continued to do other things; this ESG movement where they are trying to get the big oil and gas companies to not drill for oil. So you are an oil and gas company, you are Exxon, and they are pushing to try to get those companies to separate into two different entities so that they can cut off financing for oil and gas development projects. They are doing it right now.

We have got a number of bills to fix this. And as the gentleman talks about, we want to do these things. We want to open it up. Except if you are saying on one hand, I am going to build this road, and I don't know why you are not driving down the road. But on the other hand, you have got people barricading the road, and then you say, look, nobody's using the road, so why even bother. You know, fine them for not using the road. And then you go look at the on-ramp, and you find out that they have put 10 barricades in front of the on-ramp so you can't get on the road.

That is what President Biden has done to oil and gas drilling in America. He has actually failed to comply with the law on the requirements that he conduct lease sales that he has not

conducted which the law requires him to do. There are actually lawsuits that we have won in court, and he continues to obfuscate those laws.

So there is a bill called the Restore Onshore Energy Production Act. It immediately resumes oil and gas lease sales and requires quarterly lease sales in each State with an oil and gas program. That is something the President should be doing if he wanted to actually lower the cost of gasoline and produce in America, he would be doing, but he won't do it. So this bill would require him to do it. I would love us to bring that bill up.

And, again, if the gentleman says, Hey, why don't we produce on those 9,000 leases? This would actually help the ones that aren't dry holes where companies are trying to find out how they can go and drill, but they are being blocked by President Biden's different regulatory agencies. This would remove some of those roadblocks.

The Strategy to Secure Offshore Energy Act would actually require the publication of the 5-year plan for offshore oil and gas lease sales and require timelines for developing subsequent leasing plans. That is supposed to be done under law. The President's not doing it. This would require he do it.

The Energy Permitting Certainty Act requires the Department of the Interior to process applications for permits to drill under a valid lease, regardless of any unrelated civil actions where some of these groups use other laws like the Endangered Species Act to block drilling, again, saying there are leases. Why aren't you using them?

President Biden is saying, We are going to fine you for not using them as he is using his other agencies to stop them from using the leases.

You have got EPA over here and the Department of the Interior over there. You have got the SEC over there, all putting up roadblocks to the roadway, and then the President says, Look, there are no cars on the road. We are going to fine you for not using the road.

Well, how about you take the roadblocks off the on-ramp so that you can actually get on the road and drill? President Biden is trying to have it both ways. He is trying to appease the people who he promised, I am going to shut down drilling. Unfortunately, he is doing that. But then he is going and telling the public, I want them to drill. And in fact, I am going to fine them if they don't drill, while he is stopping them from drilling.

Again, other bills that we have to fix these problems that President Biden is putting up as roadblocks: The Securing American Energy and Investing in Reliancy Act requires the Department of the Interior to conduct all remaining offshore oil and gas leases in the current leasing plan and issue the leases, one, as a result of Lease Sale 257; additional impediments he has put

in front of people that have already followed the rules, but he is still not letting them actually go do what they want to do.

They want to drill in America, and he is forcing them out of America. That is why he is begging foreign countries when he, himself, can remove the roadblocks that he put in place to stop drilling in America.

And there are more bills. There are a number of other bills. We will be happy to go over each of them with you.

But what we are saying is, there are very specific things President Biden has done to impede the ability for us to drill in America.

There are companies all across the country that know how to drill and can't drill in America. And instead of the President trying to use taglines and divert and talk about Putin and everybody else, when he is the one that is giving Putin leverage by shutting America off—and, again, this isn't accidental. He, as a candidate, said, "No more drilling on Federal lands. No more drilling, including offshore. No ability for the gas industry to continue to drill, period. It ends."

Unfortunately, it has ended, and we are trying to get it started up again by reversing the very things Joe Biden did to stop it. And we are asking for help here on this floor to address these very specific problems.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. HOYER. Well, I am not surprised that the gentleman, and many of the bills that he refers to, want to undermine the regulation to protect the health and welfare of the American people which those are designed to do, and most of which I think, you know, the gentleman's side of the aisle did not support or enforce when they were in charge of the Presidency.

Madam Speaker, all of that rhetoric about the President doesn't want to do this, doesn't want to do this, 80 million acres. 1.7 million acres bid on. If, in fact, people were looking for additional ways and means to produce at a price that is historic, they would do so. And he dismisses, Madam Speaker, the 9,000 leases that exist. Now, maybe—

Mr. SCALISE. Madam Speaker, for correction, that is not what I did. I actually went through how those 9,000 leases are being blocked by the President from being utilized properly.

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, yes. If, in fact, that was the reason for non-production, we all would have heard of the fact when we are not producing, and the stock market would have heard about that, and the companies would be lamenting the fact that they are not producing more.

In fact, when you read their reports, they are indicating we are making very high profits. We are not putting money into production at this point in time, and we are buying back stocks, and we are paying high dividends.

I do not criticize them for making what is a business decision. That busi-

ness decision, however, has had an adverse effect. Why? Because we are not moving quickly enough to not be reliant on fossil fuels which the President, in his remarks, wants to get to.

We have a disagreement between our parties, Madam Speaker, on that issue. Drill, baby, drill. That has been the mantra forever. And it was 73 degrees yesterday. And our planet is hurting.

The trees on my property produced blossoms long before they usually do. They are confused. But not only are they confused; it is dangerous for agriculture. It is dangerous for human beings. It is dangerous for animal life. It is dangerous for our seas. And we have a difference of opinion.

That is what the President was speaking to, that we need to move towards that end, but he understands, as we all understand, that fossil fuels are necessary right now.

Natural gas is—we are the biggest producer of natural gas in the world. We are the biggest producer of oil in the world. That hasn't stopped. And, yes, we need to get to, as our Build Back Better bill does, that none of the Republicans voted for, it gets to a reliance on fuel that will not help Putin.

Now, there are some people in the Republican party who apparently think Putin is a pretty good guy. He is a genius. He is this, that, and the other.

We don't think so. We think he is a war criminal. And we think there are some other folks who are providing us with oil on whom we ought not to rely, not only for the global health, but also for our national security.

And to the extent that we invest in alternatives which, by the way, every energy company in America, and I think the world, probably—I am not going to say that, but in America—that I thought wants to do. They are all doing research on alternative energy sources because they know that at some point, we need to get off of the reliance on fossil fuel. That is what the President was speaking about.

But he leased—he put 80 million acres in the Gulf for lease. Well, why would anybody put 80 million if there was no more drilling? He put 80 million acres, and only 1.7 million the private sector even sort of nodded at, before any tests, before any knowledge. You know, they need the lease to test it.

So I say to my friend, we are going to need fossil fuel, and we need to bring gasoline prices down. But, very frankly, we are not going to bring prices down if we don't produce more product, and the focus is not higher profits, buying back stock, and making high dividends. There is no incentive to do that.

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We need to do it. I have urged the President to talk to the leaders of the energy companies in our country. They are part of the success of America. We are at war. We are at war with Putin, a war criminal, a tyrant, and that has destabilized world markets; since the last month up a dollar. That is Putin's

dollar we are paying. We are paying that dollar because of Putin.

Madam Speaker, the whip mentioned Putin as an aside; just as an aside, as if the contemplation, as the President pointed out, Madam Speaker, that Russia was going to invade Ukraine. Even Mr. Zelenskyy thought maybe you are overstating the case. Extraordinarily courageous leader in Ukraine.

So even in preparation for the instability that this war that Putin has criminally undertaken without any provocation—murdering people, women and children, people in hospitals, people in schools—yes, oil prices have gone up because the world market was very concerned about this. We don't control it here.

So although it is a dollar since he invaded, I am convinced that a substantial amount of the increase was caused by the instability of his threat. Marshalling troops at the border of Ukraine and Belarus from Russia destabilized the market, no doubt about

I tell the gentleman again, there is an ability to drill. There is an ability to do research and discover and do the seismic tests. There is that ability now. I don't accept the gentleman's premise that there is a roadblock.

The President does not want to expand. You understand that. He has said that; you quoted him. He wants to get to alternative energy sources. He wants to save the planet. I share that view with him. But we are going to have to have fossil fuels in the short term because we won't be able to power our economy or our people for some years to come.

Hopefully, by 2035, we will have a substantial reduction, and hopefully, by 2050, a very, very substantial reduction, perhaps zero. But in the short term, we are going to need a resource that has been a critical resource for the growth of our economy and other economies around the world.

Nobody is criticizing those who produce that. I say nobody. At least I am not criticizing them. But I really believe that we could get more production under present circumstances, and that is what we ought to be doing.

Mr. SCALISE. Madam Speaker, clearly the gentleman and I disagree on many of these items. Drilling in America is the cleanest way to produce oil in the world. If it is going to come from Russia, which I don't want, if it is going to come from any dictator, they actually emit more carbon than if you make it in America.

But I want to point out, as the gentleman talked about, this magical lease sale in the Gulf of Mexico and why no one bid on it, the reason is because it didn't happen. The Biden administration did not move forward with that lease sale. That is what we are trying to address with these bills.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Biden didn't make that decision; the courts made that decision.

Mr. SCALISE. But the gentleman was saying it wasn't bid on; the oil

companies didn't want to do it. They did. They wanted to invest in America. An environmental group went to block it and got a court to go along with them. The normal practice is the administration stands up for America and American policy and objects, and the Biden administration refused to challenge it in the courts because they didn't want the lease sale to go forward. And the lease sale did not go forward. That is why no one bid on it, because there was no lease sale.

We fix that with these pieces of legislation we would like to bring to the floor, but we will continue this discussion. Hopefully, we can resolve it. We will continue pushing for it.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

TRANSFORMING STUDENT DEBT

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to reintroduce our Transforming Student Debt to Home Equity Act.

Home ownership is a key that opens the door to the middle class for tens of millions of Americans. But today, too many young workers and their families are weighed down by student loan debt that keeps this dream out of their reach.

The Transforming Student Debt to Home Equity Act would create a pilot program to test various approaches that combine student loan payments and mortgage payments into one monthly bill. It would empower hardworking Americans that are current on student loan repayments to actually combine their loan costs, allowing them to build home equity.

The purpose of this act is to move forward with those pilot projects, and with millions of vacant homes around our country, this legislation would spur neighborhood revitalization and improve our quality of life.

The promises of the American Dream should be available to all, so let us lift up and invest in new means to help the next generation and invest in middle-class workers and families that build up our Nation by investing in it.

REALLOCATING EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE

(Mr. HILL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HILL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to the attack on families in rural America by the Biden administration in their reallocation of Emergency Rental Assistance funds

As of March 31, unspent ERA funds from rural States, like my home State of Arkansas, are being taken and given to a handful of blue States, like New York, California, and New Jersey, who have already received and spent their own share of Emergency Rental Assistance funds.

As the Treasury claws back this money, this reallocation of funds will disproportionately affect rural America. The reallocation of ERA money is unfair and turns a blind eye to the needs of renters who have not received rental assistance simply because they live in rural areas of our country.

To stand up for rural Arkansans and Americans across the country, I have introduced the Protecting Rural Renters Act, which will prohibit the ERA funds originally promised to our rural areas from being reallocated elsewhere.

This act would simply remove the State allocations from the statutory claw-backs and effectively prevent these funds from being taken away from our rural citizens. This is in the best interests of our Nation.

AFFIRMATIVE STEPS TOWARD CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

(Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Madam Speaker, as the conversation around the country centers on the legalization of marijuana, we must simultaneously address the criminal and racial justice issues embedded in this conversation.

Despite cannabis usage rates between White and non-Whites being similar, Black Americans are arrested for cannabis offenses at a rate of nearly four to one compared to Whites.

For decades, the war on drugs has been a tool to target Black and Brown Americans. As a result, their life trajectories have been impacted negatively.

The MORE Act would create a Community Reinvestment Grant Program, which would provide funding for communities negatively impacted by the war on drugs. These grants would be used for the development of expungement processes, employment programs, and substance use disorder treatment. These reinvestments are imperative for our communities and our country.

I am proud that I voted to pass the MORE Act today as an affirmative step toward the criminal justice reform.

NOT AN INNOCENT APRIL FOOLS' DAY PRANK

(Mr. PALAZZO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PALAZZO. Madam Speaker, last year I introduced H.R. 6176, with the goal of preventing the Secretary of Energy and the President from doing exactly what they announced this week, tapping the Strategic Petroleum Reserve without issuing a plan for American energy independence.

Now, several months after living under President Biden's failed energy policies and decisions, he has announced the largest release of oil reserves in history, putting one million additional barrels on the market per day on average every day for the next 6 months.

Biden's anti-American energy agenda jeopardizes our national security once again.

Tapping the SPR at the levels announced this week by this administration is a dangerous move. Drawing down our strategic reserves by over 25 percent poses a huge national security risk, a risk that America would not be in the place to take if Biden would end the Federal freeze on all new oil and gas projects and stop the regulatory assault on U.S. energy development and financing. Tapping the SPR will not lower gas prices.

Today is April Fools' Day, but with Biden in office you would think every day is April Fools' Day. However, he is not pulling innocent pranks on the American people, but he is personally harming the safety, security, and prosperity of America.

ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, there is so much going on these days, so much to comment on. At this time, I yield to the gentlewoman from Iowa (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS), my friend, whenever she is ready.

KEVIN MCKEE IS AN INCREDIBLE ATHLETE

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. Gohmert for yielding to me.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the accomplishments of an incredible athlete from Iowa's Second District.

Kevin McKee of Davenport recently finished competing in the Beijing 2020 Paralympics, where he won a gold medal in sled hockey. Kevin has proudly represented the United States for over a decade, winning gold medals in the last three Paralympics.

Kevin has always had a passion for sports, playing tennis in high school and wheelchair basketball in college. However, Kevin soon realized his passion for sled hockey in 2020 when he started playing on the sled hockey club team with the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago.

Beginning in 1960, the Paralympic Games are held every 4 years and feature a wide range of athletes with different physical abilities, including impaired muscle power, impaired passive range of motion, limb deficiency, leg length difference, hypertonia, ataxia, athetosis, vision impairment, and intellectual impairment. The